

BRANDING UPDATE MONTANA

FOCUS GROUPS A SUCCESS

One of the first steps in our brand discovery process was focus group research. Six focus groups were conducted in August—two in Chicago, two in Atlanta, and two in Seattle. Two of the six groups were comprised of people who had visited Montana before, and planned on visiting again; four of the six groups were people who had never visited who would consider coming to Montana.

The focus group participants were carefully screened to meet the target audience criteria determined by the branding committee. The criteria was based heavily on ITRR research, and TIA's Geotourism Study. The target audience was defined as:

- Must have taken a minimum of three trips of 50 miles or more (one-way) , away from home and/or one or more nights spent away from home within the past year.
- 57% of the sample should be women.
- 62% of the sample should have a college degree.
- 42% of the sample should have household incomes over \$75k.
- 20% of the sample should have household incomes over \$100k.

(Continued on page 2)

SEPT/OCT 2007

Points of Interest

- Focus Group Update
- Project Timeline
- Roadshow Schedule

For more info on this project, contact:

Travel Montana

Montana Dept. of Commerce
301 S. Park Ave.
Helena, MT 59620
406-841-2870 telephone
406-841-2871 fax
www.travelmontana.mt.gov

UPDATED PROJECT TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 2007

Stakeholder Meetings

- November 6-15, 2007
- ½ day workshops
 - Overview of branding initiative
 - Presentation of consumer research
 - Small group discussion to identify key statements about the Montana tourist experience
 - Large group discussion to identify common themes
- Workshop locations
 - Kalispell, Missoula, Helena, Bozeman, Billings, Glasgow & Great Falls

DECEMBER 2007/JANUARY 2008

Branding Advisory Committee Summit

- Summary of consumer research
- Summary of stakeholder workshops
- Presentation of draft branding statements (produced by MB/prime group)
- Discussion – Identification of options to test

JANUARY 2008

Consumer Testing of Branding Statements

- 250-500 online, out-of-state market test interviews

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2008

Presentation of Final Brand Platform to Travel Montana & Branding Committee

BRANDING ROADSHOW... *Coming to Your Town*

We want and need your help! Half-day workshops are scheduled to take place across the state in November. Their purpose will be to get Montanans' perspectives on what makes our state unique.

Input from these workshops will be used to produce a brand positioning statement that will be the driving force behind Montana's future tourism promotions. Our bet is, it will ring true for more industries than just tourism—and will have the potential to serve many more Montana products and services.

You can count on these workshops to provide fascinating insight on consumers' current images of Montana (based on nationwide focus groups held earlier this summer), fun & enlightening brand discovery exercises, and engaging discussion about a subject we all love: Montana.

Let's uncover Montana's brand together. Mark your calendars & plan to join us!

For the most current information on these workshops and other parts of Montana's branding project, visit Travel Montana's intranet site at: www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding

Tuesday, November 6.....Kalispell

Hilton Garden Inn
8:30am-12:30pm

Wednesday, November 7Missoula

Hilton Garden Inn
8:30am-12:30pm

Thursday, November 8.....Helena

Red Lion Colonial Inn
8:30am-12:30pm

Friday, November 9.....Bozeman

Best Western GranTree Inn
8:30am-12:30pm

Tuesday, November 13.....Billings

Holiday Inn Grand Montana
10am-2pm (with working lunch)

Wednesday, November 14Glasgow

Cottonwood Inn
1pm-5pm

Thursday, November 15.....Great Falls

Best Western Heritage Inn
1pm-5pm

FOCUS GROUPS *(Continued from page 1)*

Regions that demonstrated strong visitation to Montana (according to TM and ITRR data) and high concentrations of geotourists were selected for the focus group locations: Pacific (includes CA, WA, others); East North Central (includes IL, MI, WI, others); South Atlantic (includes FL, GA, others).

Lifestyle and attitudinal questions were also asked when screening for focus group participants. Such questions focused on environmentalism, sustainability, arts & culture, and authenticity. In going beyond simple demographics, the research team was able to select candidates that most closely matched the geotourist profile.

"We consider the groups to have been very successful. The participants were well recruited and matched the profile of the target audience(s). The three locations - Seattle, Chicago, Atlanta - provided us with the anticipated differences in awareness, opinions, etc...but also revealed consistent trends. All the groups were very engaged in the discussion and as a result, provided us with a tremendous amount of insight into their expectations, needs and existing associations with Montana.

During the October TAC Meeting, a PowerPoint presentation will offer a preview of the focus group research. Says Kevin Schulman, lead research consultant, of the presentation: "Mike and I feel it captures many of the main brand themes; both the challenges and opportunities. We've got additional hypotheses that build on these and nuanced thoughts and ideas, but this is obviously early in the process. Getting input from the stakeholders [via the statewide workshops] is obviously key to making any final conclusions."

The presentation will later be posted on Travel Montana's intranet site at www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding. Full results will be shared at the Branding Roadshow workshops, to be held across the state in November. ♦